

## Case 3610

### ***Phelister* Marseul, 1853 (Insecta, Coleoptera, HISTERIDAE): proposed conservation of usage**

Michael S. Caterino & Alexey K. Tishechkin

*Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2559 Puesta del Sol, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, U.S.A.* (corresponding author email: [mcaterino@sbnature2.org](mailto:mcaterino@sbnature2.org))

**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Article 70.2 of the Code, is to conserve the current usage of the generic name *Phelister* Marseul, 1853 for a well-established genus of histerid beetles. Modern authors cite either *Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 (designated by Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt, 1976) or *Paromalus rouzeti* Fairmaire 1850 (designated by Mazur, 1984) as the type species of *Phelister*. However, the correct, long-overlooked type species is *Platysoma venustum* LeConte, 1844, which is currently recognized as a valid species of *Baconia* Lewis, 1885. Acceptance of *Platysoma venustum* as the type species of *Phelister* would change the current concept of that genus to that of *Baconia*, and the species currently included in *Phelister* would require a new genus-group name as there are no junior synonyms from which to choose the next available name. To avoid the nomenclatural instability that would result from following the Principle of Priority, it is proposed that all type fixations for *Phelister* Marseul, 1853 preceding that of *Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 by Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt (1976) be set aside.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Insecta; Coleoptera; HISTERIDAE; *Phelister*; *Baconia*; *Phelister haemorrhous*; *Paromalus rouzeti*; *Platysoma venustum*, clown beetles; Neotropical region.

1. Marseul (1853, p. 462) proposed the generic name *Phelister* to contain 20 species, six of them previously described (*Platysoma venustum* LeConte, 1844; *Hister vernus* Say, 1825; *Hister parvulus* Erichson, 1834; *Hister pusio* Erichson, 1847; *Hister subrotundus* Say 1825, *Paromalus rouzeti* Fairmaire, 1850), and 14 of them newly described (*Phelister violaceus*, *P. cumanensis*, *P. quadripunctulus*, *P. circulifrons*, *P. bovinus*, *P. acoposternus*, *P. haemorrhous*, *P. rubens*, *P. egenus*, *P. sanguinipennis*, *P. teapensis*, *P. globiformis*, *P. bipulvinatus* and *P. brevistrius*.) No type species was designated.

2. Lewis (1885, p. 462) described the genus *Baconia* for two newly described species, *B. loricata* and *B. patula*. No type species was designated.

3. Lewis (1889, p. 46) inadvertently fixed the type species of *Phelister* as *Platysoma venustum* LeConte, 1844. In describing the species *Phelister simoni* he remarked ‘The *Phelister simoni* noticed here is a most remarkable species and one which I only place in the genus with doubt. As, however, I have given an outline of the sternal structure (which differs so much from the structure in *Phelister venustus* Leconte [sic], the type of the genus), those who study the family will be able to form an idea of its

peculiarities and to judge whether or not I have assigned it rightly to *Phelister*.' This type designation, valid under Article 69.1.1, has been overlooked by all subsequent authors.

4. Bickhardt (1917, p. 163) explicitly fixed the type species of *Baconia* as *Baconia loricata* Lewis, 1885, one of the originally included species. Despite a general thoroughness of listing or designating type species in his Genera Insectorum fascicle on HISTERIDAE, Bickhardt (1917) did not mention a type species for the genus *Phelister*.

5. Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt (1976, p. 296) listed the type species of *Phelister* as *Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 (p. 476) evidently intending to designate a type where none had been previously. This type designation has been noted and cited as valid by some modern authors (e.g. Bousquet & Laplante, 1999, 2006).

6. Mazur (1984, p. 281) cited Jacquelin du Val (1858, p. 102) as having designated the type species of *Phelister* as *Paromalus rouzeti* Fairmaire, 1850. However, it is clear from the subtitle of Jacquelin du Val (1858), 'et plus de treize cents types representant un ou plusieurs insectes de chaque genre' ('and more than thirteen hundred types representing one or more insects of every genus') that strict designation of unique type species was not his intent.

7. Mazur (1984, p. 281) moved *Phelister venusta* [sic] (LeConte) into the genus *Baconia*.

8. Mazur (1997, p. 26), apparently recognizing his error in citing Jacquelin du Val's designation of the type of *Phelister* as *Paromalus rouzeti*, then cited his own (1984) citation of *P. rouzeti* as having been the first valid type designation.

9. *Phelister* currently contains 100 described species (Mazur, 2011, p. 29). *Baconia* currently contains 27 described species. Specimens of both genera are commonly collected, well known, highly distinct from each other, and universally accepted as currently circumscribed. A list of 61 references that cite either *Phelister* or *Baconia* in the senses that we advocate has been sent to the Secretariat. Indeed, subsequent to Bickhardt's designation of the type of *Baconia*, we know of no references inconsistent with this usage.

10. Accepting *Platysoma venustum* LeConte as the type of *Phelister* would require the synonymy of *Baconia* under *Phelister*, and because the species currently contained in *Phelister* are not closely related to *Baconia*, and because *Phelister* has no junior synonyms that might be recognized as valid, a new genus-group name would be required to contain the species currently in *Phelister*. The nearly 130 new combinations that would result would cause substantial instability and confusion. The references sent to the Secretariat attest to the wide use of these names in their currently accepted senses.

11. We are currently revising the genera *Phelister* and *Baconia*, describing many dozens of new species in both, and wish to solidify the generic nomenclature before publishing any new binomials under either name. Hence we propose that the type designation by Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt (1976) of *Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 would be the best choice to stabilize the meaning of *Phelister* and prevent confusion.

12. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to set aside all type species fixations for the nominal genus-group taxon *Phelister* Marseul, 1853 (gender: masculine) before that of

- Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 by Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt (1976);
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Phelister* Marseul, 1853, type species *Phelister haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853 by subsequent designation by Kryzhanovskij & Reichardt (1976), as ruled in (1) above;
  - (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *haemorrhous* Marseul, 1853, as published in the binomen *Phelister haemorrhous* (specific name of the type species of *Phelister* Marseul, 1853, as ruled in (1) above).

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).